



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/26/0723

Chandos, Billingshurst Road, Coolham, West Sussex, RH13 8QN

DESCRIPTION:

Change of use of land from paddock to residential, formation of access and closure of existing access.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/25/0504	Demolition of existing rear extension and garden room, and erection of a two-storey rear and side extension.	Application Permitted on 21.05.2025
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DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application relates to Chandos, a detached residential property situated on the northern side of Billingshurst Road (A272), to the west of Coolham. The dwelling is set within a generous plot and forms part of a loose ribbon of residential development along this section of Billingshurst Road, with the wider surroundings predominantly comprising agricultural land and a dispersed pattern of residential, agricultural and small-scale commercial development. The site lies outside the defined built-up area boundary and is therefore within the countryside for planning policy purposes.

The application site incorporates part of the existing residential curtilage together with an adjoining section of paddock to the west. The roadside boundary is characterised by established native hedgerow planting which contributes to the generally verdant character of Billingshurst Road. The wider landscape is rural in character, comprising fields, hedgerows, shaws and woodland. The site falls within the Broadford Bridge to Ashington Farmlands Landscape Character Area, which is characterised in part by small-scale field patterns and a strong network of hedgerows and shaws. There are no landscape designations affecting the site or its immediate surroundings.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

Planning permission is sought for the change of use of part of the adjoining paddock to residential use to facilitate the formation of a replacement vehicular access and driveway serving Chandos, together with the closure of the existing access onto Billingshurst Road.

The new access would be positioned to the west of the existing access and the driveway would extend eastwards to connect with the existing residential parking area. The submitted plan shows the access formed with a metalled surface for the first 6 metres from the highway, with the remainder formed using a permeable material such as rolled gravel. The scheme incorporates visibility splays and requires the removal of part of the existing roadside hedgerow. Replacement native hedgerow and tree planting is proposed as part of the landscaping and biodiversity strategy. The existing access would be stopped up and closed.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):

Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development

Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development

Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection

Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development

Policy 33 - Development Principles

Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction

Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport

Policy 41 - Parking

Shipley Neighbourhood Plan:

The Shipley Neighbourhood Plan was formally made on 23 June 2021.

Policy Ship HD3: High quality design

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

Parish Design Statement:**Planning Advice Notes:**

Facilitating Appropriate Development

Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES

Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk

Consultations:

HDC Arboricultural officer: No Objection - There are no trees at the site. The hedgerow removal/mitigation would be an issue dealt with by the landscape team.

Landscape Architect: Holding Objection - Place Services raise a holding objection to the proposal on landscape grounds. They consider that insufficient justification has been provided for the removal of the existing roadside hedgerow, which is an important feature contributing to the rural character of Billingshurst Road and the wider landscape structure. Whilst replacement hedgerow planting is proposed, the submitted scheme is not considered to reflect the established roadside character, historic field pattern, or local landscape context, particularly due to the significant setback of the replacement hedge and the introduction of an additional internal hedgerow that would create an artificial field boundary. Concerns are also raised regarding the potential impact on the setting of the nearby Grade II listed building, and consultation with the Conservation Officer is recommended. Place Services conclude that the proposal conflicts with Policies 25, 26 and 32 of the HDPF and request further evidence, justification and detailed planting specifications before the application can be supported.

Southern Water: Comment – Standard Advice

WSCC Highways: No Objection - The LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:
None Received

Parish Comments:
Shipley Parish Council: No Objection

Member Comments:
None received

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:

The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development:

Policy 1 of the HDPF establishes the Council's positive approach to sustainable development. Policy 25 seeks to protect, conserve and enhance the District's landscape and natural environment, whilst Policy 26 relates specifically to development within the countryside and seeks to ensure that development is appropriate to its countryside location and protects or enhances the key characteristics of the relevant landscape character area. Policies 32 and 33 additionally require development to achieve a high standard of design which responds appropriately to its context.

The proposal involves the change of use of a relatively limited area of paddock to facilitate the relocation of the existing residential access and driveway. It does not create an additional dwelling or introduce a materially different level or type of activity into the countryside. Rather, the land would perform an ancillary function in connection with the established residential use of Chandos.

Having regard to the limited scale and purpose of the change of use, its relationship with the existing dwelling and the absence of any material intensification of residential activity, the proposal would not result in an unacceptable encroachment or level of activity within the countryside. Subject to the detailed considerations below, the principle of development is therefore considered acceptable.

Design and Appearance:

Policies 25, 32 and 33 of the HDPF seek to ensure that development protects landscape character and responds appropriately to its surroundings. Policy Ship HD3 of the Shipley Neighbourhood Plan is also relevant in requiring high-quality design.

The development would introduce a driveway into an area presently forming part of the adjoining paddock. However, its physical extent is limited and the driveway would remain closely related to the established residential property rather than representing a substantial projection of built development into the wider field.

The proposed materials are also appropriate to the semi-rural setting. The first section adjoining the highway would be metalled, with the remainder proposed as a permeable surface such as rolled gravel.

The development does not include additional built structures and, once the replacement landscaping has established, views of the driveway from Billingshurst Road would be filtered by vegetation.

The change in character arising from the residential use of this limited area of land is therefore considered modest. The development would remain visually and functionally associated with Chandos and would not fundamentally alter the wider rural character of the locality. The proposal is consequently considered acceptable in design and character terms, subject to the landscape mitigation addressed below.

Landscape

The principal landscape issue relates to the removal of part of the established roadside hedgerow to accommodate the relocated access and the visibility splays required by the Highway Authority. Place Service's Landscape Adviser, does not support the proposal as submitted on landscape grounds. The principal concerns relate to the contribution of the existing hedgerow to the verdant character of Billingshurst Road, the setback of the proposed replacement hedgerow and the introduction of an additional internal hedgerow which, in their view, does not reflect the established historic field pattern. The Landscape Adviser nevertheless acknowledges that the proposed native species mix is appropriate in landscape terms and that the proposed hedgerow and tree planting would contribute towards biodiversity enhancement.

These concerns have been carefully considered. There would be some localised landscape harm through the removal of an established section of roadside hedgerow and the temporary opening-up of the frontage before replacement planting becomes established. However, the removal is directly associated with achieving the new access and necessary visibility rather than being undertaken simply to create a more suburban or open residential frontage. The existing access would conversely be closed, and native planting is proposed as part of the overall scheme.

The site is not within a designated landscape, no buildings are proposed, and the physical works are limited principally to the formation of the driveway and access. Policy N2 of the NPPF requires development proposals to consider landscape character and the natural qualities of the countryside and identify opportunities for those qualities to be conserved or enhanced. Furthermore, the resultant appearance of the access would be similar to those already present on this stretch of road. In any case, the site is located on a main road, albeit in the countryside, where this form of access into a property would not be considered out of the ordinary.

The Landscape Adviser's outstanding concerns principally concern the detail of the mitigation: the alignment and specification of replacement planting, plant sizes, proportions, quantities, establishment and maintenance. These are matters which are capable of being controlled through an appropriately worded planning condition rather than matters which go fundamentally to whether development can take place.

A pre-commencement condition is therefore suggested requiring a detailed landscape mitigation scheme before any development, site clearance or hedgerow removal takes place. This requires details of the alignment, species composition, planting sizes, quantities and densities of the replacement frontage hedgerow, together with other tree and hedgerow planting, ground preparation, establishment measures and a five-year maintenance programme. This provides the LPA with the ability to secure an appropriate landscape response before the existing vegetation is removed.

Officers are therefore satisfied that, notwithstanding the Landscape Adviser's concerns with the submitted detail, the site is capable of accommodating an appropriate mitigation scheme. Subject to the imposed condition, the localised landscape effects would be satisfactorily mitigated and would not justify withholding permission when weighed against the limited scale of the works and the highway safety purpose of the relocated access.

Residential Amenity:

Policy 33 of the HDPF seeks to ensure that development does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

The proposal would not result in any new residential accommodation or buildings. The relocated driveway would continue to serve the existing dwelling and there is no evidence that the development would result in a material intensification of the residential use of the property or materially increase vehicular movements.

Given the nature and scale of the works, their relationship with Chandos and the separation from neighbouring dwellings, the proposal would not result in unacceptable overlooking, loss of privacy, overbearing effects, noise or disturbance to neighbouring occupiers. No objections have been received from neighbouring residents, and the proposal is considered acceptable in residential amenity terms.

Highways Impacts:

Policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF seek safe and suitable access arrangements and appropriate parking provision.

The existing access serves Chandos directly from the A272. The purpose of the proposal is to relocate this access to improve visibility when entering and leaving the site. The Local Highway Authority has assessed the application and raises no objection, concluding that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in severe cumulative effects on the highway network.

The Highway Authority requires visibility splays of 2.4 metres by 43 metres at the new access and the physical closure of the existing access. Both matters are secured by conditions prior to occupation/use of the development.

The proposal would retain the existing parking provision serving Chandos and would not itself generate additional residential traffic. The relocated access would instead provide an improved point of entry and egress with controlled visibility. Subject to the recommended conditions, there are no highway grounds to resist the proposal.

Water Neutrality:

A 2021 Position Statement from Natural England identified that it could not be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in the Sussex North Water Supply Zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites. As a consequence, and to comply with the legal duties set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the Habitat Regulations), all new development since has been required to demonstrate water neutrality.

On 31st October 2025 Natural England formally withdrew the 2021 Position Statement, citing a package of measures that they were satisfied would safeguard the Arun Valley sites. Principal amongst these measures is a reduction in the Southern Water abstraction licence 'by March 2026'. However, given the licence change has not yet taken place Horsham District Council, as competent authority under the Habitats Regulations, cannot yet be certain that new development will not result in adverse impacts on the Arun Valley sites.

To ensure development can come forward as water neutral in the meantime, the Council has agreed with Natural England to use the significant water savings made by Southern Water in 2024/25 through their programme of leakage reduction (amongst other measures). This has generated some 3,240,000 litres per day of water savings that can now be attributed to new development without increasing water abstraction in the Arun Valley beyond baseline. These savings were previously to be used to launch the Sussex North Water Certification Scheme (SNWCS), however following the withdrawal statement SNWCS will no longer be launching. Natural England standing advice dated 10 November 2025 raises no objection to using these savings to enable development to come forward. The standing advice clarifies that it functions as Natural England's formal response pursuant to Regulation 63(3) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to all relevant planning applications which seek to achieve water neutrality using the above Southern Water savings.

Officers have undertaken an Appropriate Assessment which demonstrates that the anticipated increase in mains water consumption from this development, alongside all other development granted since the 31st October 2025, will not exceed 3,240,000 litres per day.

Accordingly, Officers consider that the proposed development will not have an Adverse Effect on the Integrity of the Arun Valley Site, either alone or in combination with other plan and projects, thereby complying with Regulations 63 and 70 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, HDPF Policy 31, and paragraph 193 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) mandates that every development must achieve at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) (unless the development qualifies as exempt under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024) and that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that development must not be begun unless a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority and the planning authority has approved the Plan.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must show how the development will achieve the required minimum 10% BNG using the statutory biodiversity metric tool and must demonstrate how the habitats will be managed and maintained for 30 years, starting from the date the development is completed. Off-site gains (on unregistered sites) and significant on-site enhancements will be secured over this period by way of a Legal Agreement.

The submitted Small Sites Metric identifies a baseline site area of approximately 1,008.68sqm and applies the statutory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain target. The metric records no loss of area habitat units, with the existing urban and grassland habitats retained, and identifies the creation of additional habitat units through the proposed planting.

The development is therefore capable of meeting the statutory BNG requirement, subject to the submission and approval of the Biodiversity Gain Plan pursuant to the statutory biodiversity gain condition.

Conclusions:

The proposal is acceptable in principle and would provide an improved access arrangement without materially increasing activity within the countryside. Whilst the loss of roadside hedgerow would result in some localised landscape harm, this can be satisfactorily mitigated through replacement native planting secured by condition. No unacceptable impacts would arise in respect of residential amenity, biodiversity or highway safety. The proposal therefore accords with the development plan when read as a whole and planning permission is recommended.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

- 2 **Standard Time Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 3 **Pre-commencement Condition:** No development shall commence, including any works of site clearance or removal of the existing hedgerow, until a detailed scheme of landscape mitigation has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include:

- a) details of the replacement native hedgerow planting along the Billingshurst Road frontage, including its alignment, species composition, planting sizes, quantities and densities;
- b) details of all other proposed tree, hedgerow and soft landscape planting within the site;
- c) details of ground preparation, planting methods and measures for the protection and establishment of new planting;
- d) a programme for implementation, together with details of maintenance and management for a period of five years following planting;
- e) Hard and soft landscape materials, and;
- f) proposed boundary treatments (including gates etc.).

The approved landscaping scheme shall be implemented in full during the first available planting season following completion of the access works, or in accordance with such other timetable as may first be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Any tree, hedge or plant comprised within the approved scheme which, within a period of five years from the date of planting, dies, is removed, or becomes seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced during the next available planting season with a specimen of the same species and size, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure appropriate landscape mitigation is secured prior to development and to conserve and enhance the rural character, green infrastructure and biodiversity value of the site, in accordance with Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 4 **Pre-occupation Condition:** No part of the development shall be first occupied until visibility splays of 2.4 metres by 43 metres have been provided at the proposed site vehicular access onto Billingshurst Road in accordance with plans and details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once provided the splays shall thereafter be maintained and kept free of all obstructions over a height of 0.6 metre above adjoining carriageway level or as otherwise agreed.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and facilitate the efficient operation of the development, in accordance with Policy 40 and 41 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 5 **Pre-occupation Condition:** No part of the development shall be first occupied until such time as the existing vehicular access onto Billingshurst Road has been physically closed in accordance with plans and details submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and facilitate the efficient operation of the development, in accordance with Policy 40 and 41 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

Plans list for: DC/26/0723

Schedule of plans/documents **approved:**

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Supporting Statement	Planning	BR/21/288	05.05.2026
Supporting Docs	BNG Maps	NONE	05.05.2026

Supporting Docs	Biodiversity Gain Plan Report	NONE	05.05.2026
Location plan		MLP/01	05.05.2026
Site plan	Existing	MLP/02	05.05.2026
Site plan	Proposed	MLP/03	05.05.2026
Layout plan	And BNG	MLP/04	05.05.2026
Photos		NONE	08.06.2026
Supporting Statement	Draft Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan	NONE	08.06.2026
Supporting Docs	BNG Small site metric calculation tool	NONE	19.05.2026

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Shazia Penne Date: 25.09.2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial RHERMITAGE Date: 28.09.2026